

honor and taking part in a great American tradition, which asks you to live with honor and loyalty and act with courage and service.

It is a creed of common purpose and community service based on the Scout oath, ever present in the 12 points of the Scout law.

While each of you as Eagle Scouts will forever be an Eagle Scout, your accomplishments are not easily defined by the number of badges earned but, rather, the character and dignity you show in earning them. For Andrew and Timothy, that dignity has been shaped by your remarkable grandmother, Mrs. Marilyn Roberson. Thank you, Mrs. Roberson, for your dedication to your family and for your service to our great State and for the legacy you have created for so many.

I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING SANDRA MASON

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I have often talked about the importance of the many professional staff members and various support services that allow for the proper functioning of this great institution, the U.S. Senate. These individuals and offices are rarely mentioned in newspapers or history books, but they work many long hours with great energy, exceptional skill, and admirable adherence to high quality work. As a result, the contribution of such dedicated public servants greatly assists the work we do as Senators; they make our work more pleasant and productive than otherwise would be possible.

An example of the sense of pride and loyalty that Senate employees bring to their daily responsibilities is the career of Mrs. Sandra Mason, who prior to her retirement was the Director of Protocol and Foreign Travel for the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. Mrs. Sandra Mason, who was known to her many friends in the Senate as "Sandy" served on the staff of that committee from 1979 through 2008, when she completed her Federal employment. As one can easily imagine, this is a position of considerable responsibility, which in no small part determines the successful hosting of

high-level foreign dignitaries visiting the Senate, as well as the efficient operation of official Senate delegations traveling abroad. I remember that when I traveled on Senate business accompanied by my dear wife Erma, Sandy Mason's hard work and expert aplomb made all the difference for a memorable and very positive undertaking.

During her entire extraordinary career, which commenced with employment with Senator Hubert H. Humphrey in 1971, Sandy earned the love, respect, and praise of all those who worked with her and came to know her.

Sandy passed away on Monday, March 8, 2010. She will be greatly missed but certainly not forgotten. I extend warm personal condolences to her husband Ronald, her son Aaron, and all of her beloved family, and offer my sincere wishes that she, and they, receive the Blessings of our Creator.

Let fate do her worst, there are relics of joy,
Bright dreams of the past that she cannot destroy,

That come in the night-time of sorrow and care,
And bring back the features that joy used to wear.

Long, long be my heart with such memories filled,
Like the vase in which roses have once been distilled,

You may break, you may shatter the vase if you will,
But the scent of the roses will hang round it still.

Scent of the Roses
—by Thomas Moore

STATE DEPARTMENT HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTS

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, this month's release of the State Department's annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices shows the value of consistently monitoring human rights around the globe.

As Chairman of the U.S. Helsinki Commission charged with monitoring international human rights commitments in 56 countries from the U.S. and Canada to Europe and Central Asia, this annual report is a key tool that we, and others, use to track progress being made on universal freedoms.

This year's reports have increased significance as 2010 is the 35th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act and the 20th anniversary of historic international human rights agreements, the Copenhagen Document, and the Charter of Paris for a New Europe.

In a year commemorating such landmark human rights documents, this month's State Department reports remind us that many of the commitments countries made in the past still have not been met with meaningful action today.

In Belarus, where I visited last summer, the political space for opposition remains tightly controlled, independent media face continual harassment, and elections are a farce.

The overall situation in Russia remains disturbing as well. There 2009

was a year again filled with mourning the very people who stood for freedom, be they journalists, human rights advocates or lawyers simply trying to present a case against corruption. The country's harassment of Jehovah's Witnesses and forceful break up of public demonstrations remain particularly concerning.

I urge Kazakhstan, as the current chair of the OSCE, to lead by example through concrete actions, starting with the release of activist Yevgeny Zhovtis, whom staff from the Helsinki Commission visited this week in prison. Zhovtis at least deserves the same freedoms afforded other prisoners in his facility, including the right to work outside the facility during the day.

In Kosovo, in addition to problems with human trafficking, official corruption and a lack of judicial due process, the State Department notes the lack of progress regarding displaced persons of all ethnicities, politically and ethnically motivated violence, and societal antipathy against Serbs and the Serbian Orthodox Church. The lack of progress regarding the country's international recognition, while unfortunate, does not absolve Kosovo authorities from their responsibility to ensure greater respect for human rights and adherence to the rule of law.

Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy Human Rights and Labor Michael Posner, who serves as the State Department Commissioner on the U.S. Helsinki Commission, did a superb job of unveiling the report today with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

I was heartened to hear him specifically flag examples of 2009 human rights violations within the OSCE region that drew the attention of the Commission last year. The banning of construction of Muslim minarets in Switzerland, the pervasiveness of discrimination against Roma—Europe's largest ethnic minority, and the continued rise of anti-Semitism in Europe sadly still remain concerns this year.

While these country reports help to hold all governments—including our own—to account; and while much of their text shows the reality of a world troubled by violent conflicts and the mistreatment of our most vulnerable people; the State Department reports also show the positive that surrounds us.

In this vein, Assistant Secretary Posner was right to mention the fairness of Ukraine's recent elections, for which my colleague Cochairman HASTINGS led the election observation mission. And the reports are eager to cite progress where appropriate.

But these reports affirm something else, and that is the strength of the legislative-executive branch cooperation when it comes to upholding universal standards. The Helsinki Commission is unique among all federal agencies for being comprised of Senate, House and executive branch commissioners, and Assistant Secretary Posner's activity with the Commission